

Optical Document Security

Third Edition

Rudolf L. van Renesse

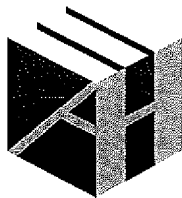
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Contents

Preface to the Third Edition	<i>xiii</i>
Acknowledgments	<i>xvii</i>

CHAPTER 1

Introduction to Optical Document Security: The Color of Light and Matter	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 The Intrinsic Color of Matter	2
1.2.1 Optically Invariable Matter	2
1.2.2 The Main Optical Phenomena	3
1.3 Color Theory	6
1.3.1 Eye Sensitivity	6
1.3.2 Primary Colors and the Mixing of Colors	8
1.3.3 Complementary Colors	12
1.3.4 Maxwell's Color Triangle	15
1.3.5 The CIE Chromaticity Diagram	16
1.3.6 The Limitation of Subtractive Color Mixing	20
1.3.7 Color Separation and Color Reproduction	22
1.3.8 Uniform Color Space: CIELAB	25
1.3.9 Colorfastness	27
References	29

CHAPTER 2

Introduction to Optical Document Security: The Color of Colorless Matter	31
2.1 Introduction	31
2.2 Metallic Reflection	32
2.3 Light Interference and Diffraction	32
2.3.1 The Interference of Wave Patterns	33
2.3.2 Light Diffraction by Gratings	36
2.3.3 The Recording and Reconstruction of Interference Patterns	40
2.4 Interference Colors: Thin Films	47
2.4.1 The Colors of Single Layer Structures	47
2.4.2 The Colors of Multilayer Structures	54
2.5 Discussion	59
References	60

CHAPTER 3

Substrate-Based Security	63
3.1 Introduction	63
3.2 Paper Substrates	63
3.2.1 Composition	63
3.2.2 Watermarks	64
3.2.3 Chemical Reactants	68
3.2.4 Mechanical Properties: Feel and Sound	70
3.2.5 Fluorescence	71
3.2.6 Size of Valuable Documents	72
3.2.7 Tint and Gloss	72
3.2.8 Security Fibers	73
3.2.9 Planchets	75
3.2.10 Embedded Thread	76
3.2.11 Windowed Thread	78
3.2.12 Perforation	79
3.3 Plastic Substrates	83
3.3.1 Plastic Cards	84
3.3.2 Synthetic Papers	89
References	94

CHAPTER 4

Printing Inks and Printing Techniques	97
4.1 Introduction	97
4.2 Printing Inks	97
4.2.1 Reversible Photosensitivity	97
4.2.2 Thermochromic Inks	102
4.2.3 Metameric Inks	104
4.2.4 Bleed-Through Security Numbering	107
4.2.5 Fugitive Inks, Solvents, and Bleaches	109
4.2.6 Iridescent Inks	111
4.2.7 Magnetic Inks	111
4.2.8 Tagging of Valuable Documents and Products	114
4.3 Printing Techniques	115
4.3.1 Intaglio Printing	115
4.3.2 Letterpress Printing	120
4.3.3 Offset Printing	123
4.3.4 Screen Printing	125
References	126

CHAPTER 5

Printed Security Patterns	129
5.1 Introduction	129
5.2 Classic Images	130
5.2.1 Guilloches	130
5.2.2 Microprinting	131
5.2.3 See-Through Register	133

5.2.4	Engraved Portraits	135
5.2.5	Transitory Images	137
5.3	Digitally Watermarked Images	141
5.3.1	Overt Digital Watermarks	142
5.3.2	Covert Digital Watermarks	142
5.4	Screen-Decoded Images	146
5.4.1	Classification of Screen-Decoded Images	146
5.4.2	Carrier-Screen Images	147
5.4.3	Scrambled Images	161
5.4.4	Hidden Images Versus Scrambled Images	163
5.4.5	Application of Screen-Decoded Images	164
	References	167

CHAPTER 6

	Diffraction-Based Security Features	171
6.1	Optical Variability	171
6.1.1	Noniridescent Optical Variability	171
6.1.2	Iridescent Optically Variable Devices	176
6.2	DOVIDs	177
6.2.1	First-Order DOVIDs—General	177
6.2.2	Laser Transmission Holograms	181
6.2.3	First-Order DOVIDs—3D	183
6.2.4	First-Order DOVIDs—Flat Artwork	189
6.2.5	ZODs	212
6.2.6	Semitransparent Overlays	217
	References	220

CHAPTER 7

	Interference-Based Security Features	223
7.1	Introduction	223
7.1.1	General Properties of ISISs	223
7.1.2	Counterfeiting ISISs	225
7.1.3	Single-Layer Structures	225
7.1.4	Enhanced Pearl Luster Pigments	228
7.2	Multilayer Structures	229
7.2.1	All-Dielectric Thin Films	229
7.2.2	Metal-Dielectric Thin Films	231
7.2.3	Liquid Crystals	237
7.2.4	Polymerized Liquid Crystals	245
7.2.5	Volume-Reflection Holography	250
7.2.6	Lippmann Photography	252
7.2.7	Coextruded Multilayers	255
7.2.8	Combinations of DOVIDs and ISISs	258
7.3	Discussion	259
	References	260

CHAPTER 8

Security Design and Evaluation	265
8.1 Development of a Security Product	265
8.1.1 The Security Policy	266
8.1.2 The Risk Analysis	266
8.1.3 The Program of Requirements	269
8.1.4 The Security Program	273
8.2 The Design Process	274
8.2.1 The Function of the Product	274
8.2.2 The Basic Design Cycle	275
8.2.3 The Characteristics of the Design	277
8.3 Some Ergonomic Considerations	279
8.3.1 The Ergonomic Action Cycle	279
8.3.2 Image Complexity	283
8.3.3 Structure Complexity	285
8.4 Evaluation	287
8.4.1 The Evaluation Process	287
8.4.2 Expertise and Tools	288
8.4.3 Evaluation Standards	290
References	292

CHAPTER 9

An Introduction to Biometrics	295
9.1 Introduction	295
9.1.1 Identity and Personal Document Security	295
9.1.2 Three Basic Identifiers	296
9.1.3 Properties of Identifiers	299
9.2 The Basics of Biometrics	302
9.2.1 The Uniqueness of Biometric Characteristics	302
9.2.2 Biometric Procedures	303
9.2.3 The Accuracy of Biometrics	305
9.2.4 Biometric Functional Rates	308
9.3 A Survey of Biometric Techniques	311
9.3.1 Physical Characteristics	313
9.3.2 Behavioral Characteristics	325
9.4 Biometrics on Public-Scale Identification Documents	328
9.4.1 Scalability of Biometric Trials	328
9.4.2 Sabotage of the Enrollment Procedure	329
9.4.3 Zero-Effort Attack	329
9.4.4 Sabotage by Forced Failure to Verify	330
9.4.5 Sabotage of the Biometric Functionality of the Identification Document	330
9.4.6 Legal Aspects	331
9.5 The Promise of Biometrics	331
References	333

Appendix of Optically Variable Devices (OVDs)	339
A.1 Diffractive Optically Variable Image Devices (DOVIDs)	339
Explanation of Figure A.1	341
A.2 Interference Security Image Structures (ISISs) and Combinations of DOVIDs and ISISs	348
About the Author	353
Index	355

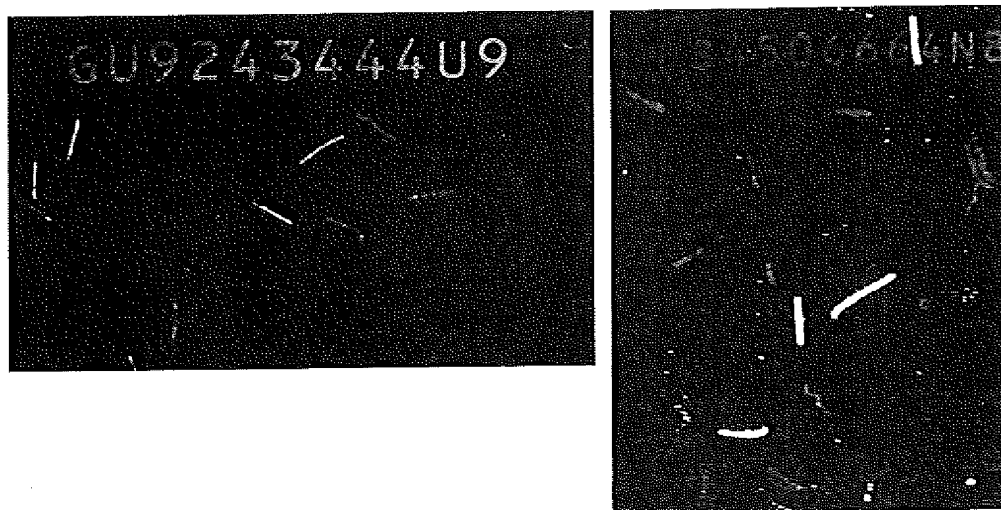


Figure 3.12 Security fibers fluorescent in red, yellow, and blue on German DM100 note. Genuine note (left) and counterfeit note with printed fibers (right). Note that the numbering on the genuine as well as the counterfeit note is printed in green fluorescent ink.

3.2.9 Planchets

During paper production, tiny disks about 2 mm in diameter, referred to as *planchets* or *confetti*, can be added to the paper furnish. Because of the random dispersion, no document will contain planchets (or security fibers) in corresponding positions. Planchets can be colored (see Figure 3.13) or colorless and only visible under ultraviolet irradiation. Fluorescent planchets may appear colored in visible

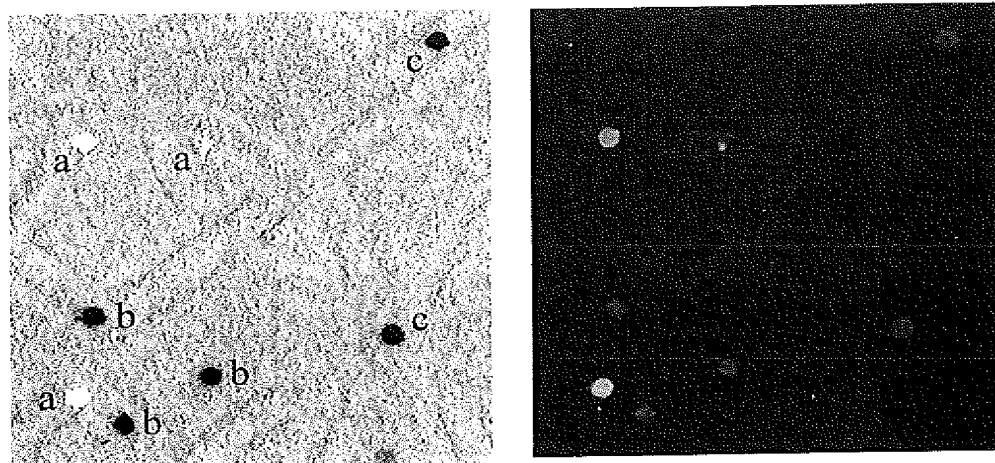


Figure 3.13 Fluorescent planchets with various colors (Iridium security paper). Left: round colored planchets in white light—yellow (a), blue (b), and magenta (c). Right: the same planchets fluorescing under ultraviolet irradiation in light blue (a), blue (b), and red (c). (Sample courtesy of: Aussead-Rey Group, France.) (Original image width: 34 mm.)

light as well. Planchets may even contain micro printing or chemicals that change color under exposure by ammonia vapor.

Planchets can also be iridescent like those in the paper of the old Dutch DFL 10, DFL 100, and DFL 1000 series (see Figure 3.14), and they generally appear randomly dispersed in a band a few centimeters wide.

Iridescent planchets consist of a stack of numerous alternating thin thermoplastic films—for instance, of coextruded polypropylene and polycarbonate (see Chapter 7, Section 7.2.7). If these iridescent planchets are successively observed in specular reflection and in diffuse reflection, complementary colors are alternately displayed, such as yellow versus blue-violet or green versus magenta. This co-extruded multi-layer material is widely available, but applying tiny iridescent disks of this material to each single counterfeit note is a cumbersome task. Characteristic of planchets is that they can be integrally detached from the paper surface with a needle (like security fibers), contrary to printed, painted, or colored-pencil imitation planchets. Obviously, the latter is not an efficient inspection routine. Crude imitations of iridescent planchets are produced by printing or drawing with metallic ink.

It is noted that bank notes that have been laundered may lose many planchets, if not all, in the process. The absence of iridescence is an indication of counterfeiting, although it must be considered that worn and laundered genuine notes may have totally lost their planchets. In that case, the empty places show up as blanks in the printed areas. The presence of iridescent planchets appears to offer significant proof of authenticity; although the iridescent material is widely available, this seems not to have appeared on counterfeits.

3.2.10 Embedded Thread

A thin polyester ribbon, about 0.5 to a few millimeters wide, can be embedded in the paper furnish during paper production. In its simplest form, such a *security thread* is rendered opaque with a white or metallic coating. Also, it can be provided with transparent inks to render it a certain color. Furthermore, the thread can be coated with fluorescent or magnetic inks.

Security threads can be further metal coated and subsequently be locally demetallized to create transparent positive or negative microlettering (see Figure 3.15). Embedded threads with microlettering are often imitated with the use of printing techniques. However, the contrast of the imitations is generally notably inferior to that of genuine security threads and this can be easily established by comparing a questioned note with a genuine note. If professional counterfeiters have

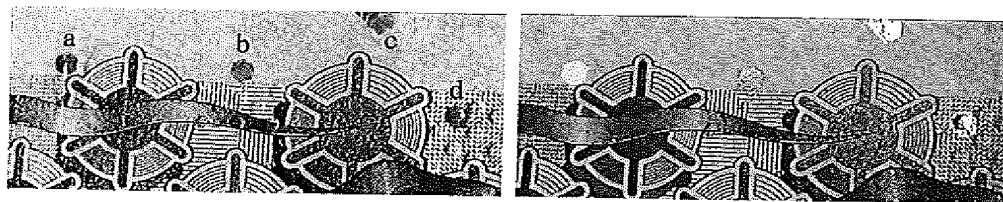


Figure 3.14 Iridescent hexagonal planchets on Dutch 100 guilder note in detail. Left: diffuse reflection in the colors magenta (a), blue (b), blueviolet (c) and magenta (d). Right: specular reflection in the complementary colors green (a), reddish (b), yellow (c), and green (d). (Image width: 30 mm, planchets' diameter: 2 mm.)